



# PG&E Marysville Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site Remedial Investigation Completed



*California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control*

## Introduction

The California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), is overseeing the remedial investigation (RI) and cleanup at Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) Marysville former manufactured gas plant (MGP) site. This fact sheet includes the results of the RIs at the Marysville former MGP site, located on 4th Street between A Street and the Yuba River Levee (see Figure 1), the site history, the schedule for development of the draft remedial action plan (RAP) proposal, and a community questionnaire.

## Site Background

From the early 1800's through the mid-1900's, manufactured gas plants (MGPs) were operated by utility companies nationwide to produce gas from coal or oil for lighting, heating, and cooking. The gas manufacturing and purification processes yielded by-products or gas plant residues, including tars, sludges, lampblack, light oils, and other petroleum products. Residues not reused in other processes remained at some of these MGP sites.

The Marysville MGP operated from 1898 to 1939 on the southern 2.2 acres of the existing 6-acre property. The MGP started as a water-gas plant, using oil as the feedstock. The first plant, located on the southeastern portion of the site, was removed in the mid-1920s and an electric substation was constructed. A new and expanded MGP was built on the property to the west. The MGP facility was removed in 1956-57. PG&E uses the present 6-acre site as a service center for its gas and electric operations and as a substation.

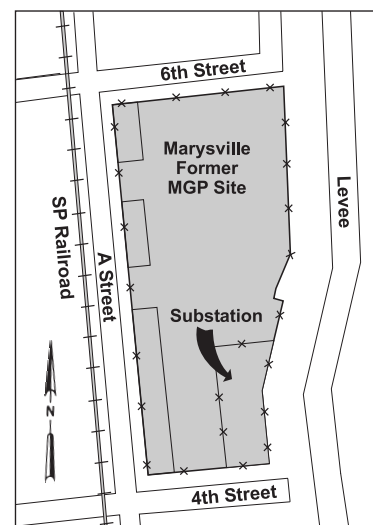
The Marysville site was first investigated in a preliminary assessment in 1986. Additional investigations were conducted in 1991, 1995, and 1997-98.

## What are Gas Plant Residues?

The principal chemicals of concern contained in gas plant residues are polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon compounds (PNAs). PNAs are organic chemicals formed when organic materials such as coal, oil, petroleum fuels, or even foods are not completely burned (that is, PNAs are products of incomplete combustion). PNAs are found in a wide variety of commonly encountered materials such as diesel exhaust fumes, roofing tars, asphalt, smoke from fireplaces, cigarette smoke, and in the black charring of charcoal-grilled meats. PNAs tend not to move in the environment because they adhere to soil and do not readily dissolve in water.

Other chemical compounds of concern which could remain at MGP sites include petroleum hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs are also found in products such as industrial solvents, degreasers, paint thinners, nail polish, and gasoline. Most VOCs are soluble to some extent in water.

VOCs readily move through soil and groundwater and, if exposed to air, will evaporate rapidly.



*Figure 1 - Location of PG&E Marysville Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site*

## What are the Potential Health Effects of Gas Plant Residues?

Some PNA compounds are suspected human carcinogens (that is, they are suspected to cause cancer). Other PNAs may cause acute and/or chronic health effects if people are exposed to relatively high concentrations of the chemical. Exposure to PNAs can occur if soils containing these compounds come into direct contact with or accumulate on skin surfaces (dermal contact), by breathing dust containing PNAs (inhalation), or by holding food in dirty hands and then eating it (ingestion).

Some VOCs may cause acute and/or chronic health effects to humans that are exposed to these chemicals. The nature and severity of health effects is dependent upon the dose and duration of exposure.

## Investigations Completed

Soil and groundwater data collected during the remedial investigations show that soil is contaminated in the immediate vicinity of the former MGP and that groundwater is contaminated beneath the central portion of the site. PNAs, petroleum hydrocarbons, and VOCs are found in soil between the surface and 30 feet below ground surface in various locations. The extent of the soil contamination has been delineated and the groundwater beneath the center of the site has been monitored regularly during the last 6 years. Groundwater immediately beneath the center of the site is contaminated with PNAs, petroleum hydrocarbons, and VOCs.

## Cleanup Alternative Being Evaluated

A feasibility study (FS) to develop soil and groundwater cleanup alternatives is underway and scheduled to be completed in early 2001. The FS evaluates the soil and groundwater cleanup alternatives for effectiveness, protection of human health and the environment, cost, and other criteria. The alternatives that best meet the criteria are recommended for the cleanup. A health risk assessment will be completed with the FS. Upon completion, both documents will be placed in the repositories listed below.

## What Happens Next?

A proposed draft remedial action plan (RAP) that summarizes the RI and FS will be prepared. The draft RAP is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2001, and will be placed in the information repositories. This document will describe site conditions, the remedial action alternatives that were considered, and the recommended remedial action. Members of the public and regulatory agencies will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft

RAP and associated California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents. The public comment period will extend a minimum of 30 days, during which the DTSC will hold at least one public meeting. DTSC will review and respond in writing to all public comments. After responding to comments, DTSC will make any appropriate changes before issuing the final RAP.

## Public Interested in Participating

DTSC encourages you to participate in the decision-making process. Opportunities for participation include:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Public Review and Comment on the draft RAP
- Public Meeting
- Public Repositories

DTSC will continue to inform and involve the public on the status of the site and future remediation activities.

### For More Information

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(916) 255-3585

**Kim Rhodes**

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Cal-EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control  
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(916) 255-3651

**Lisa Kunz**

Media Contact  
(916) 327-6104

### Information Repositories

Related documents are available for review at the following locations:

**Yuba County Library**

303 Second Street  
Marysville, CA  
95901

**Yuba Community College**

District 2088  
North Beale Road  
Marysville, CA  
95901

*The complete Administrative Record is available at DTSC*

**Department of Toxic Substances Control**

Regional File Room  
10151 Croydon Way, Suite 3  
Sacramento, CA 95827

## Glossary

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** - A law mandating environmental impact review of governmental action in California. The Act applies generally to all activities undertaken by state and local agencies, and to private activities financed, regulated, or approved by state and local agencies.

**Feasibility Study** - A study to evaluate alternatives to reduce or eliminate risks posed by the chemicals at a site.

**Groundwater** - Water below the ground surface that moves slowly through the spaces between soil and rock particles.

**Health Risk Assessment** - A study examining whether there is a potential for people and/or the environment to be exposed to chemicals at a site and what the potential effects of exposure might be.

**Monitoring Wells** - Wells drilled at specific locations on or around a site where groundwater can be sampled at selected depths and studied to determine the direction in which groundwater flows and the types and amounts of chemicals present.

**Natural Attenuation** - A naturally occurring chemical and biological process that breaks down some toxic chemicals into non-toxic chemicals in soil or groundwater.

**PNA** - An acronym for polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbon compounds.

**Remedial Action** - A corrective action taken to reduce, remove, or isolate chemicals in soil or groundwater.

**Remedial Action Plan (RAP)** - A document describing which remedial action (cleanup) alternative has been selected.

**Remedial Investigation (RI)** - A study to identify the types and extent of contamination at a site.

**Petroleum Hydrocarbons** - Any of numerous organic compounds such as gasoline and diesel fuels that contain carbon and hydrogen and are derived from petroleum products.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)** - Any of a number of organic compounds that volatilize (evaporate) readily when exposed to air.

## Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 to reach DTSC, Public Participation Specialist, Kim Rhodes at (916) 255-3651.

COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a moment to complete the following questions and the address information and return the questionnaire to Kim Rhodes at the address below. Marysville Site

1. How long have you lived in this area?  
☐ 0-5 years      ☐ 6-12 years  
☐ 13-20 years      ☐ 21 years or more

2a. Did you previously know that a manufac-  
tured gas plant (MGP) had been located  
on the site?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

2b. Did you previously know that hazardous  
substances from the MGP operations are  
still present in soil and groundwater  
beneath the site?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

2c. If yes to either 2a or 2b, where did  
you acquire your previous knowledge  
about the site?  
☐ Newspapers      ☐ Neighbors  
☐ Relatives  
☐ Other (please specify):

3. What is your current level of interest in  
this site, if any?  
☐ None      ☐ Low to moderate  
☐ Moderate to high

4. Do you have any specific concerns about  
this site? If so, please specify.

5a. Have you had any contact with local,  
state or other officials regarding this site?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

5a. If yes, what was the nature of this contact?
6. What is the best way to provide you  
with information?  
☐ Fact Sheet      ☐ Community Meetings  
☐ Other (please specify):

7. What languages are spoken in your  
community?

8. Can you suggest anyone else we may want  
to talk to?

9. Would you be interested in an interview  
with a DTSC representative about this site?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

10. Please make any additional comments that  
are of concern to you.
11. Please include your name, address, phone,  
and email.

Name:

Address:

City:

State:      Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Are You On Our Mailing List?

If you did not receive this fact sheet in the mail and wish to be on PG&E mailing list for the Marysville site, please complete the coupon below and send it to:

**Kim Rhodes**  
Public Participation Specialist  
Department of Toxic Substances Control  
10151 Croydon Way, Suite 3  
Sacramento, California 95827

DTSC mailing lists are solely for the purpose of keeping persons informed of DTSC activities. Mailing list are not routinely released to outside parties. However, they are considered records and, if requested, may be subject to release.

PLEASE INCLUDE ME ON THE PG&E MAILING LIST.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Community Questionnaire Enclosed**